

City of Rochester, New York

Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Participatory Evaluation Process



Robert J. Duffy, Mayor
City of Rochester, NY

PEP Evaluation Report

City of Rochester, NY

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BNI Impact Area 1: Provide technical assistance and resources to neighborhood groups, organizations and City departments involved in planning efforts through NBN.

BNI Impact Area 2: Coordination and oversight of NBN implementation activities.

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“Should there be a bottom-up “citizen-driven” system of government?” Based on the community’s input and the key findings of the NBN Participatory Evaluation Process report, it appears that the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) is beneficial to the Rochester community and has increased the social capital of citizens.

The question then becomes “How does the City Administration continue the efforts of the NBN Process?” and “What retooling may need to occur to enhance the process or is there a different approach?”

Some of the responses to these questions were explored through the analysis of the evaluation and are presented throughout the report. This Executive Summary includes the key findings and recommendations.

It is clear that the many participants and contributors to the NBN process would like the City Administration to continue to use this process as its approach to engaging citizens, formulating community priorities and as a means to leverage community action, leadership and community resources.

A participatory evaluation was conducted which involved soliciting community input, convening a Stakeholder Advisory Group and retaining a professional evaluator who facilitated the evaluation design and organization of this report. The evaluation focused on the overall NBN Process objective to “**Maintain stable, healthy and diverse neighborhoods within the city that are interdependent and interrelated.**”

Using this NBN objective, three impact areas were established to conduct the evaluation:

- NBN Impact Area 1: **Healthy Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods that can respond to challenges on their own and are self-activated.
- NBN Impact Area 2: **Stable Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods with institutionalized leadership among their residents, who are seen as legitimate.
- NBN Impact Area 3: **Diverse Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods where people come together across economic, educational, racial and cultural lines and form personal lasting relationships and are seen as inclusive.

A fourth impact area was established that evaluated how the NBN Process has been integrated as a citizen engagement process for doing business within the City

Administration:

- NBN Impact Area 4: **Integration of NBN**: NBN is recognized as the formal process within the City Administration for planning and engaging the community.

Finally, an assessment was also conducted on the resources and technical support provided by the City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives to the sector groups, City Departments and NBN stakeholders. The bureau is responsible for the overall coordination of sector groups, city departments and organizations.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

It is apparent that there is great value in the contributions that resulted from the NBN Process. The overall finding is that the City of Rochester should continue to use the NBN Process model to engage citizens to determine community priorities. There were many successes that should be commended in addition to some key challenges that should be addressed to move forward.

Key successes:

1. Sector groups continuously demonstrated their ability to leverage human and financial resources. Sector groups recruited over 7,000 community volunteers and secured over \$4.5 million in non-City financial and in-kind resources to complete neighborhood activities in their action plans.
2. Sector groups were increasingly willing to take the lead on addressing the challenges in and improving their neighborhoods. Sectors increased the percentage of action plan activities on which they took the lead from 62% in the Original NBN action plans to 80% of the activities in the NBN3 action plans. By NBN3 an average of four of the five neighborhood activities were driven by the sectors, not City government.
3. Given the right framework, citizens understand the value of and wide variety of community assets in their communities. Using the McKnight Asset-Based Community Development model, with guidance provided by the Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives, sector groups were able to inventory an average of 870 community assets in and around Rochester neighborhoods over the three NBN planning phases.
4. Citizens in Rochester want to be engaged in planning for the future of their neighborhoods. The NBN Process engaged over 700 citizen planners throughout the community in creating visions of their neighborhoods and developing and implementing plans to fulfill those visions.

5. Sector groups generally have been successful at implementing what they planned. On average, sector groups completed at least 75% of the activities in their action plans. Most of these activities have been related to the sector vision statements. The sectors' continuous ability to respond to challenges on their own is evident in their ongoing neighborhood planning. Despite not having an official planning process to update their sector action plans, each of the ten sectors are currently engaged in neighborhood activities to strengthen their organization or undertaking new neighborhood projects.
6. The NBN Process has had a positive visual impact on the city. Over 100 visual improvement projects have been completed across the ten sector areas between 1996 and 2005. Examples include the Sander Street Vineyard, Norris Drive Speed Humps, Nathaniel Rochester Square, University Avenue ART Walk, Project 'No Boards', new downtown housing such as Symphony Terrace, the opening of the Soul Food Café and the Bill Davis Overlook.
7. The NBN Process has been incorporated into the governing culture of the City Administration and used as the main citizen involvement process. An NBN Priority Council made up of City/RCSD department heads was established to coordinate NBN activities in their respective departments.
8. The NBN Process has established a venue for foundations and the private sector to develop programs and invest resources that support community priorities. As a result various City departments have been able to use the NBN citizen engagement process to leverage \$4.8 million and created over a dozen new programs and initiatives.
9. The City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives has provided a substantial amount of support and technical assistance at relatively low cost. The Bureau has been able to leverage additional resources for neighborhoods to use in addressing challenges, including funding for the NBN Institute, NeighborLink, and Youth and Community Technology Leader Programs.

Key Challenges:

1. While a large number of citizens have participated on sector committees and as sector leaders, sector committee membership and leadership does not adequately reflect some of the neighborhoods in various sector areas and the diversity of Rochester neighborhoods. In particular, the racial/ethnic composition of sector committees generally is more reflective of the demographics of homeowners than of the sector population as a whole. This indicates that renters, particularly African-American and Hispanic renters, are underrepresented on sector committees and among

sector leadership. Younger adults and teens appear to be underrepresented as well. This may result in sector action plans that do not reflect the diverse viewpoints and lifestyles of certain constituents.

2. Despite the large number of assets identified by citizens, some community assets are not identified or under-utilized in implementing activities to improve neighborhoods. While identified by at least one-half of the sector groups, few or none used non-City government agencies, faith-based organizations, mass media, banks, and gifts of individuals or local institutions in completing activities in their action plans. Only two sectors identified libraries and senior organizations (including senior living facilities) as assets in their neighborhoods. It appears that sector groups did not correlate the inventorying of neighborhood assets with the development of their sector action plans.
3. The NBN Process is a volunteer driven initiative, which has often placed a burden on the time, and bureaucracy citizens must encounter.
4. While there appears to be a high level of commitment on the part of sector leaders involved in the NBN Process, there needs to be a plan for continuous recruiting, retaining and training new leaders. Leaders need to be better equipped to serve on behalf of their communities and to facilitate an inclusive, productive and an informed group process.
5. While NBN is part of how the City Administration does business, its integration into the culture of City departments is inconsistent. Some departments appear to engage citizens early and often during the planning processes, however there are some departments who do not seem to use the sector groups input when determining priorities. In addition there are times when departments have allowed the process to be superseded by individuals or constituent groups outside the sector process.
6. Community input indicates there are inadequate processes to assure the consideration of divergent views and priorities, which lead to issues: within the sector groups, between the sectors groups and other community stakeholders and between the City Administration and the sectors. However there did not appear to be concern regarding the communication between City Council and sector groups. This may be because City Council members have often been strong advocates for the sectors they represent.
7. It is likely that sectors recruited even more volunteers and leveraged even more in-kind and financial resources than reported. Community input indicates that sector and neighborhood groups within sectors may have been inconsistent in their reporting. If evaluating the impact of the NBN

Process continues, a system of consistent tracking and measuring of results will need to be established.

8. Even though an effort has been occurring on a continuous basis to assess the performance of the sector groups and the implementation of the actions plans, a process will need to be in place to encourage ongoing reporting of neighborhood activities by all the sector groups. Not having web base access to the NBN tools and the Information Management System may discourage some groups from adequately reporting on activities in a timely fashion.
9. Community input has indicated that there are differences of opinion on what neighborhood boundaries and names should be recognized and how this relates to the meaning of 'sector'.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the evaluation findings and the key successes and challenges:

Neighbors Building Neighborhoods should remain a part of doing business in City Government. The NBN Process is an effective mechanism for citizen engagement in the City Administration. The process should continue to be:

1. An asset-driven community development model;
2. A 'bottom-up' decision making process in which community priorities are set by citizens;
3. A process that values the self-efficacy of neighborhoods;
4. A culture that enables and facilitates action from citizens as opposed to controlling and directing them.

The NBN Process should be retooled and initiatives further enhanced based on the following recommendations as well as further input from the community:

1. Develop sector governance standards to ensure diversity, inclusivity and legitimacy in how sectors engage in planning and implementing activities. Such standards would include:
 - a. Open meetings and planning processes
 - b. Ensuring a process for communicating with the community at large
 - c. Monitoring of sector budgets and fiduciary responsibility
 - d. Operating a process that uses consensus building principles
 - e. Ensuring a process to address grievances within the sector
 - f. Ensuring diverse community input through marketing and recruitment
 - g. An adequate leadership succession and monitoring plan

2. Explore and develop processes to create a more streamlined approach to getting things done in a timely manner and at non-traditional hours for citizens, creating customer friendly environments and a team approach to solving problems and helping sector groups access City funds more expeditiously.
3. Develop and implement recruitment and retention strategies for both citizens and leaders to engage a diverse population and target specific constituent groups within each sector group.
4. Require sector leaders to have certain performance expectations and to attend formal orientations on the NBN Process.
5. Ensure the integration and standardization of City Department involvement in NBN.
6. Provide ongoing McKnight training to sector groups to ensure that sectors and citizens think “out of the box” regarding community assets and that they are more fully utilized.
7. Provide training or on-going training to sector groups and leaders on:
 - a. City processes and systems
 - b. Leadership skills and processes
 - c. Planning technology
 - d. Grant writing
8. Focus on establishing planning boundaries that maximize neighborhood identity and the mosaic partnership of Rochester’s diverse neighborhoods.
9. Strengthen the Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives so it can effectively focus on:
 - a. Providing asset development training;
 - b. Facilitating networks with community stakeholders to connect partnerships and resources;
 - c. Monitoring the participation and inclusiveness of groups.
10. Conduct regular evaluations of the NBN Process using pre-established outcome/impact-related performance indicators (NBN by the Numbers).

Acknowledgements

The City of Rochester's Department of Community Development, Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives would like to recognize the thousands of citizens that have contributed to the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) Process since its inception in 1994. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the sector planning groups, city departments and community stakeholders who have spent tireless hours and years in this process. Their input in the 10NBN Participatory Evaluation Process (PEP) over the last eighteen months has provided us with many thoughts and recommendations for retooling the NBN Process. Over 160 individuals completed evaluation surveys or participated in community roundtable discussions and other venues to discuss the NBN Process or their perspectives on citizen engagement and planning in the Rochester community. Without their invaluable input this report would not have been possible.

We would also like to also acknowledge the PEP Evaluator, Evaluation Consultants and individuals who served on the PEP Stakeholders Advisory Group and helped guide the formation of this evaluation process and report.

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Overview and Short History of the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Process

“The Duffy Administration can keep Rochester at the forefront of strengthening citizen effectiveness by establishing a framework that will plan for impact and results.”

Over the 12 years since its inception, the City of Rochester's Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) has been recognized nationally, and internationally, as a leader in citizen-based planning and in reinventing local government. Most recently, Rochester is cited as a best practice model in 2005's "Results that Matter: Improving Communities by Engaging Citizens, Measuring Performance, and Getting Things Done", written by Epstein, Coates and Wray. The work of Rochester's citizens, neighborhood associations, public servants and community leaders has established NBN activities as a benchmark for engaging citizens in planning and priority-setting; building community capacity and leadership; and facilitating community action and investment.

Despite the national and international recognition that NBN has earned, the City Administration realized early in the process that there were ongoing process issues that needed to be addressed and NBN initiatives that needed re-tooling. As a result, NBN was designed with mechanisms to continuously seek input, feedback and improvement. These mechanisms include sector leaders meetings, community events and specific evaluation surveys.

In a general sense, the priorities that have emerged from the community revolve around NBN remaining a "grass-roots", citizen-driven process, improving the inclusiveness of the sector committees and leadership, establishing more efficient means to allocate diminishing resources toward neighborhood priorities, providing ongoing capacity training to citizens and streamlining the bureaucracy of City Hall.

Some aspects of these matters were addressed as adjustments to the process as each subsequent NBN planning phase was undertaken. At the end of the most recent phase, NBN3, city staff decided that a comprehensive formal evaluation was needed to appropriately measure the extent to which NBN has achieved its objectives. A participatory evaluation process, supported by a professional evaluator, was selected as the means by which city staff and NBN leaders could learn how to enhance the citizen-based planning process and how to document the value and effectiveness of citizen input.

Neighborhood Planning Before NBN

One of the major objectives of NBN Process is to enhance the ability of neighborhood organizations to organize and “do for themselves”. Currently, the city administrator role is to facilitate assistance in completing the NBN planning process and help build the capacity of the sector planning committees and neighborhood organizations to utilize local resources and assets to implement the sector action plans. Before the NBN Process, key public administrators and City Council members were the main conduit for the public's communication and influence into City Hall. If residents or neighborhood leaders had issues

or needed to have something done they generally lobbied to their City Council members or County managers.

At that time the main source of funding for neighborhood development was through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) Program, which was administered generally by a City Planner who went out to the community to solicit neighborhood organizations on their overall community issues and the types of resources that were needed. The entire community was not involved in any comprehensive planning process that would allow them to further develop and prioritize what maybe needed in their neighborhoods. It was basically a deficit-planning model that focused on the needs and problems of neighborhoods (Sometimes even giving a perception of walls between lower income neighborhoods and the rest of the community). Neighborhood groups would often encounter conflicts of interest between their ideas and the City's ideas regarding what resources were needed to enhance neighborhood proposals. Many areas of the city were not considered for any funding or programs.

As a result, a large part of the community would compete with each other for funding and often the more advanced community groups would receive the most funds, regardless of need. Relationships between citizen groups and City Hall began to reflect distrust, lack of faith and cynicism. The City Administration realized a concerted effort needed to occur on developing more productive communication between the community and its government, in addition to finding a better way for citizens to have a voice in determining the priorities of their community.

Initiating the NBN Process

NBN planning process started out as a “grass-roots” approach to updating the City's Comprehensive Plan wherein the City Administration, along with neighborhood leaders, organized Rochester community into ten geographical sector planning areas. Citizens and organizations in each area formed what is now known as sector planning groups. Creating citizen groups for planning purposes provided a new coalition of community stewards that collectively could begin thinking beyond their respective neighborhoods. This community planning structure did not replace the existing neighborhoods or neighborhood names or stakeholder and service provider roles in the community. The intent was to encourage more effective collaborations, create common ground for community problem solving and to develop strategies that could influence decisions and ultimately change their sector neighborhoods.

This was a different approach than the traditional model in which the city planner or community organizer would attend meetings, direct the process, and possibly determine the outcomes. This traditional planning model left the accountability for results on city government. The NBN model proposed that citizens now act as their own neighborhood planners with City staff to play a role as facilitators of resources who provide training and tools to shape the community's vision.

At the same time the City was rolling out its new neighborhood planning process another

concerted effort was being initiated by an area legislator to lobby the governor to consider restructuring the State of New York Neighborhood Based Alliance (NBA) Program, a new community planning effort, into the NBN model. During that time many of Rochester's agencies and neighborhood organizations had attempted to apply the NBA model to select neighborhoods in the Rochester Community.

One of the key issues the NBA participants struggled with was the development of real citizen participation. The planning process was mostly driven by agency representatives or paid planning professionals who did not adequately provide residents with the opportunity to create a foundation for change. The City's Neighborhood Planning Process, later to be called Neighbors Building Neighborhoods, was suggested as a new approach to citywide citizen planning.

During the early 1990's Partners for Livable Communities, in collaboration with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and selected communities (including Rochester), began exploring innovative strategies to engage citizens and community building principles that other cities could replicate to make their communities more livable for all citizens. The community building strategies included: creating a vision through public participation; establishing community benchmarks and indicators; undertaking comprehensive action strategies; adopting a regional perspective and establishing a stewardship body. Many of these concepts were included in the Neighbors Building Neighborhoods (NBN) model. Despite the fact that there was ongoing tracking and reporting of NBN activities, there was no process in place to establish community benchmarks and indicators that would effectively measure impact.

Creating an Asset-Based Community Planning Model

As the sector groups began to transition from a planning mode to implementing their sector action plans, it became necessary to focus less on planning meetings and more on building the capacity of the sectors and sector members. One of the principles of the NBN Process is to mobilize each sector area's community assets as the primary vehicle for implementing the sector action plans.

This asset-based community development paradigm is intended to affirm and build upon the work already being developed in the sector area neighborhoods by using the resources available in the community, such as the contributions of residents, associates, businesses, schools and organizations. The process began with developing the internal capacity of the sector groups before leveraging community resources. Once the capacities of sector members, associates and institutions were established, the sector groups began a process for mobilizing relationships between local institutions, businesses and residents to identify significant partners and investments of resources for implementing their neighborhood activities.

Over the years the commitment of Rochester's citizens has allowed NBN to emerge as a

nationally recognized model that engages and supports the vast human resources that neighborhoods represent. Another principle of NBN is to continue expanding the philosophy of reducing citizen dependency on city government. It is quite evident through the \$4.5 million in community assets and resources that were leveraged and the nearly 7000 volunteers that contributed to the implementation of the sector action plans, that citizens are leading in making an impact in the Rochester community. In addition to what this data illustrates, one should also take into account that 80% of the NBN3 sector action plan activities were led by the community, not City government.

The work of each sector group in defining critical neighborhood issues and identifying resources to address them has helped develop public policy that has reaped many benefits. The NBN Process has leveraged over \$10 million since the beginning of the process to support Rochester's neighborhoods.

As a result there are now more skilled and equipped citizens, numerous federal and foundation grants have been secured; new City Administration programs and initiatives created, designations of outdoor art museum and preservation districts, new housing, jobs, transportation studies, community development corporations, national case studies and awards to name a few NBN accomplishments. Greater relations now exist with citizens and City government and a network of partnerships with private and public institutions are being formed.

The NBN Process began a community campaign to restore grass-root citizens' belief that they could express what was needed in their neighborhoods to effect change. A former neighborhood leader noted:

"The NBN Process transformed its citizens from being cynical and distrustful to saying okay, it really doesn't matter what the City does bottom line, because there are things we can identify that we can do ourselves."

Why the 10 NBN Participatory Evaluation Process was conducted

A participatory evaluation was conducted to engage stakeholders in evaluating the effectiveness of the City's NBN Process and allow various community stakeholders to play an active role in the evaluation design process. The NBN Participatory Evaluation Process (PEP) goals were to: utilize the community in determining the effectiveness of the NBN process over the past ten years; identify areas for improvement and recommendations for a future planning efforts; and propose the next steps and key components of a new NBN planning process. The components of the evaluation included: creating a Stakeholders Advisory Group that would advise on the design, input and measures for the community report; creating venues for community engagement and input; and research and data collection from the NBN Information Management System and other sources. The PEP Stakeholders Advisory Group included current and former sector group representatives, and representatives from businesses, United Way Agency, Rochester Area Community Foundation, faith community, Rochester City School District, City Council and City departments. In addition a professional evaluator was brought on to analyze the data, assist

in the development of the community indicators, facilitate focus group discussions and work with the PEP Advisory Group to prepare the evaluation findings and recommendations for a community report.

Over the last year many techniques were used to solicit the communities input. Through various methods (i.e. survey questionnaires, community roundtable sessions, focus groups and sector leadership workshops) numerous individuals were engaged to solicit their feedback on the effectiveness of the NBN Process and the opportunities for improvement. The participatory evaluation process allowed those who have the most at stake (sector groups, City departments and community stakeholders involved in the process) to have input in the design, research and data that would be used to assess the performance indicators.

Some of the areas the evaluation focused on include:

- Measuring the impact of NBN on sustaining Healthy, Stable and Diverse Neighborhoods and the integration of NBN as a citizen's engagement process;
- Assessing the number of volunteers; use of community assets and resources; visual improvements; legitimacy of leadership and collaborations; accomplishment of sector action plans and use and program performance of NBN Initiatives;
- Determining the effectiveness of the NBN process through a number of evaluation elements which looks at the operation, coordination and technical assistance provided through the City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives, and program performance of NBN Initiatives (programs implemented to support NBN).

The evaluation will also explore three impact areas in the assessment of the City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives. In 2001, the City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives (BNI) was created to provide oversight, coordination and technical assistance for the entire NBN Process. Several initiatives were created to provide ongoing support to sector groups, City departments and the community at large. In order to support and provide technical assistance to other programs and initiatives integrated with NBN, BNI staff created an infrastructure and network of staff liaisons with City departments and Rochester City School District; a NBN Priority Council consisting of key City department heads who were responsible for coordinating NBN activities within their respective departments; a Sector Leaders and Community Development Corporation Group was formed that has convened monthly since the inception of NBN to serve as a sounding board for community input and information sharing.

BNI Staff also oversees the operation of ten citywide computer sites, a database and tracking reporting system through the NeighborLink Network, a NBN technology support system. The office also provides training and capacity building to citizens through the NBN Institute. Promotional campaigns and other initiatives were created throughout the NBN Phases to attract volunteers, youth, colleges, foundations and the private sector into NBN neighborhood improvement efforts. Staff also serve on various community boards, and provide ongoing NBN presentations and consultation workshops to other communities as a

means of networking and lobbying for community funds to support the sector action plan activities.

The Format of the Evaluation Report

This report provides an analysis of each of the seven impact areas along with lessons learned and recommendations; a summary of these conclusions and recommendations for a future NBN completes the report. Profiles of each sector planning group and logic models for each of the impact areas are included in the appendix.

In order to address the original NBN goal: To establish and maintain stable, healthy and diverse neighborhoods, a number of performance outcomes were identified for program activities and the NBN Process' long-term impact. There are four impact areas that were identified based on the original NBN goals:

- **Healthy Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods that can respond to challenges on their own and are self-activated
- **Stable Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods that have institutionalized leadership among their residents, who are seen as legitimate
- **Diverse Neighborhoods:** Neighborhoods where people come together across economic, racial and cultural lines and form personal lasting relationships and are seen as inclusive
- **Integration of NBN:** NBN recognized as the formal process within the City Administration for planning and engaging the community

The report also includes three impact areas that address the operation, coordination and technical assistance provided through the City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives:

- **Provide technical assistance** to neighborhood group organizations and City departments involved in planning efforts through NBN;
- **Coordination and oversight of NBN** Implementation activities;
- **Build the capacity of neighborhood groups** to develop and implement sector and neighborhood plans.

The report will illustrate the impact of the NBN Process and the experiences of working collectively together is continuously paying large dividends to the Rochester community.

Conclusion “ The Future of NBN ”

Participatory governance is working in the Rochester community. Citizens and City government are working together, collectively, to maintain stable, healthy and diverse neighborhoods. Teaching citizens the ability to “fish” whether through the use of community assets, leadership or in neighborhoods working together is NBN’s philosophy for creating more accountable citizens and sustaining Rochester’s community building efforts.

To ensure that these efforts continue, an on-going evaluation is required to measure the impact of the NBN Process and the accountability of the citizens and stakeholders involved. The use of neighborhood impact indicators should be used to measure the future impact of NBN and should be incorporated in the Rochester By Numbers model.

Since there has not been a review of the original neighborhood planning process goals and objectives established in 1994, these goals and objectives should be revisited and revised to reflect the current priorities of the City Administration and community.

The importance of citizen input and advocacy has been a hallmark of the City Administration. The NBN Process has allowed citizens to share in the responsibilities of maintaining and improving the quality of their neighborhoods. This philosophy should be encouraged when deciding how sector groups are organized, named or sector neighborhood boundaries are determined. The term “sector” is designed to be used as a planning term only, and not intended to replace or supercede existing neighborhoods or organizations.

Oversight from the Mayors office is needed to ensure consistent participation by all City departments and that there is priority on the administration part to value citizens input and neighborhood priorities.

Establishing productive relationships between City departments and sector groups is essential to facilitating outstanding customer service.

Some of the key successes of NBN have been:

- Encouraging a planning process that is driven by citizens where citizens are given the opportunity to “fish” on their own. Eighty-three per cent of the NBN3 Sector Action Plan activities were led by the community, which demonstrates a desire for citizen commitment to their community. Use the strengths of citizens to continue leveraging the community assets and resources and tools needed to prioritize neighborhood improvement activities and the City Administration goals;
- The ability of sectors to respond to challenges on their own is demonstrated by the \$4.5 million in community resources that were reported as leveraged by the sector groups;

- Through the citizen engagement effort of NBN the City Administration was able to secure \$4.8 million for various new programs and initiatives;
- As a result of NBN, at least 100 visual neighborhood improvements were created throughout the community;
- Sector leaders demonstrated a continued commitment to the NBN Process by maintaining a 75 percent attendance rate at monthly Sector Leaders meetings ten years after the inception of the NBN Process;
- The sector groups are able to act and lead on their own as indicated in their continued neighborhood planning despite not having a formal planning process administered by the City Administration. Sector groups reported a committee membership of 284 members city-wide at the end of 2005; and
- Approximately 7,000 individuals have participated in the implementation of the sector action plans.

To improve NBN, the following is recommended:

- Citizens and leaders need to be better equipped to lead on today's neighborhood challenges. Training is needed in leadership development, asset-based community development, working effectively with groups, grant writing and navigating through city government policies and systems;
- Sector group governing systems need to be created and monitored to ensure continuous new leadership and that there is an open process that allows for an inclusiveness of views from all citizens;
- More ongoing dialogue is needed among the sector groups and community stakeholders (not for profits, private sector, neighborhood businesses, faith institutions, colleges) in creative ways to create partnerships, expand funding opportunities and work effectively in addressing mutual community goals;
- Sector groups were not able to spend all of the City Administration and community resources provided to their groups over the years. Some innovative approaches are needed to identifying creative neighborhood proposals that are conducive to the funding sources, helping neighborhood groups spend funds in a timely fashion, allowing additional funds to be targeted to groups that have the capacity of spending faster and project proposals align with City and community's priorities. A better process is also needed to disperse funds to neighborhood groups without the current layers of bureaucracy;
- The City Administrations investment of \$3.8 million in the staffing and program operation for the coordination and oversight of the NBN Process has contributed

to leveraging approximately \$10 million dollars of investment to this community over a ten-year period. The technical assistance and resources provided by the Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives is an advantage to facilitating on going City and community resources, coordinating the citizen engagement processes with other City departments and external groups, further evaluating and retooling of the NBN Planning Process; and

- Use the national recognition of the NBN Planning Process to solicit more federal funds and lobby for grant opportunities.

The NBN Planning Process has proven to be a comprehensive approach in citizen engagement that has broadened the community's participation and trust, and created mutual accountability for Rochester's future.

Every effort must be made to continue building the social capital and private investments that result from neighbors truly building neighborhoods. The next level of NBN planning must be more be more strategic, taking a different approach in targeting resources and holding everyone equally accountable.

10NBN Participatory Evaluation Process

Glossary of Terms

The City of Rochester's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives (BNI): A unit within the City Administration that provides technical support and resources to neighborhood groups, organizations, and City departments involved in planning efforts through the "Neighbors Building Neighborhoods," process.

Capacity Building: Providing Sector groups and individuals with the community building skills and resources needed to achieve their sector area goals. (Examples: customized training; organizing people and assets; access to information and resources).

Census Information: Demographic data collected and reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, regarding the U.S. population.

Collaborative: The process of citizens and stakeholders working together in the NBN process.

Community Assets: Potential resources identified from within a sector or neighborhood that may be used to support activities.

Community Engagement: The civic involvement process of citizens and stakeholders in the community.

Community Planning & Support Unit: A unit in the City's Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives that provides staff liaisons and technical support to neighborhood groups, organizations and City departments involved in planning efforts through the NBN process.

Community Resource: Non-City Administration resources generally from foundations and the private sector that supports the implementation of NBN neighborhood improvement activities.

Community Stakeholders: Not-for-profit organizations, businesses and corporate representatives that are involved in the NBN process.

City Contract Administration Process: The process used by the Bureau of Neighborhood Initiatives to manage the development and execution of city contract agreements between the sector group and their fiduciaries.

Horizontal Relationship: A peer to peer experience that creates opportunities among citizens and stakeholders to develop sustained relationships of mutual respect, networking and support.

NBN Forecast Report: A NBN report that provides a detailed analysis of each of the ten (10) Sector Action Plan's progress.

Information Management System: The NBN information system (a real time database) that is used to track and monitor the activities that result from the NBN sector action plans.

NBN Goal Theme: A means of grouping NBN activities by common elements and subject areas taken from the (10) ten Sector Action Plans goal statements.

NBN Liaison Process: A process in which BNI staff are assigned to sector groups and City departments in order to effectively track ongoing community and city department participation in the NBN Planning Process.

NBN2 Planning Process: The 2nd Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Planning Process that occurred from 1999-2001 to amend the sector action plans.

NBN3 Planning Process: The 3rd Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Planning Process that occurred from 2001-2005 to amend the sector action plans.

Non-traditional assets: Resources that are not funded directly by the City of Rochester.

Original NBN: The first Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Planning Process initiated for the entire City of Rochester (1994 - 1999).

Peer Consulting: The technical assistance and information sharing provided to municipalities and other groups interested in replicating the NBN process.

Community Priority Issues: Common neighborhood and community concerns that are of highest urgency to the entire community.

Rochester 2010 -The Renaissance Plan: Is the City of Rochester's comprehensive plan, adopted in 1999. This plan is a vision for this region and provides a framework for carefully charting its destiny. This vision also includes the input from the (10) ten sectors planning groups developed through the NBN process.

Sector Planning Groups: A group of citizens and stakeholders organized to create a NBN sector plan and implement neighborhood improvement activities. Ten planning sector areas have been created within the city of Rochester.

Sector Targeted Funding Initiative (STFI): A City of Rochester grant program that provided specifically targeted funding to create capital improvement and economic development projects. Each sector area was eligible to receive \$100,000 provided that the sector demonstrated a 1:1 match in support of a project.

Visual Improvements: NBN initiated projects that resulted in the modification of real property or visible outcomes.